Group Fort Macon Y2K Business Continuity Contingency Plan Exercise
Conducted August - September 1999

Executive Summary

United States Coast Guard (USCG) Group Fort Macon experienced multiple power and communication outages that resulted from the onslaught of two major hurricanes. Hurricanes Dennis and Floyd caused severe problems during August and September 1999. Problems included a loss of commercial power to all Stations, some for a period of 4 days; loss of power to VHF-FM high sites; failures of emergency generators; loss of phone service and overloaded cellular phone circuits; and even a loss of city water and sewer at one Station. The amount of failures and the extent of the losses far exceeded any planned exercise of the unit's Business Continuity and Contingency Plan (BCCP). However, the knowledge gained from these experiences is being used to increase the unit's readiness for Y2K. Readiness will be improved by identifying equipment that needs to be purchased, replaced, or repaired; modifying emergency response procedures; and improving communications and coordination between emergency response groups both within the USCG and in the local community.

Background

Group Fort Macon has developed a BCCP to identify specific contingency plans and procedures that can be implemented in the event of Y2K related failures and other emergencies. The plan contains strategies to mitigate risks and documents procedures and assignments to enable emergency response while continuing normal operations. The BCCP addresses all aspects of Group operations including communication with unit personnel, with other USCG units, and with other port stakeholders; back-up communications equipment such as VHF-FM radios; back-up power sources for facilities and equipment such as batteries and emergency generators; staffing; supply and logistics; and personal services such as food and berthing for watchstanders.

The primary purpose of the plan is to ensure readiness for Y2K critical dates; however, the planning provides an excellent framework to address any emergency situation.

Step 1 – Establish Major Objectives

The major objective of Group Fort Macon was to use the actual outages and other failures that resulted from the hurricanes as a means to evaluate the Y2K readiness of the unit.

Step 2 – Identify Exercise Participants

Participants are listed in the table below.

Participant Type	Participant
United States Coast Guard	
	Group Fort Macon
Other	
	Tenants at Fort Macon

Table 1 – Fort Macon Exercise Participants

Step 3 – Develop Exercise Scenario(s)

The Group Fort Macon exercise consisted of the following full-scale scenario:

- ***Multiple Outages and Failures*** – This scenario involved actual failures including:
  - Loss of Commercial Power at Stations
  - Emergency Generator Failures
  - Lost or Intermittent Phone Line Connections
  - Overloaded Cellular Phone Circuits
  - Loss of Power at VHF-FM High Sites
  - Lack of Galley Services
  - Loss of City Water and Sewer

Step 4 – Conduct Exercise Activities

This section presents the primary Group Fort Macon exercise activities.

- ***Multiple Outages and Failures***
  - Station generators picked up the load from the loss of commercial power. Fuel supply was not a problem and enough fuel remained at all the Stations for 3 to 4 more days. Portable generators were delivered to Station Hobucken to offset the failed generator. This equipment was used to supply power to the communications room and refrigerated storage.

  - Stations maintained contact with Local Emergency Service and the Group via VHF radios when phone lines or cellular lines were not available.

  - Portable generators were delivered to high sites. In some cases, phone lines from the sites were still inoperable. Stations set up 24 hour watches to cover local areas. Offshore coverage was hampered due to cutters leaving the area of responsibility (AOR) because of the storms.

  - Gas grills were used to offset failed galley services.

  - Wrightsville Beach maintains a supply of bottled water on hand. This water was used to offset failures in city water and sewer services to the site.

Step 5 – Conduct Post Exercise Analysis

The results of the post exercise analysis are provided in the table on the next page.

No.	Observation/Explanation	Lesson Learned	Recommended Action
1	Some Station emergency generators should be updated.	Station Hobucken and Station Wrightsville Beach generators are severely under powered for the demand. Updated emergency generators that can handle the load are required.	Both Stations have requested replacement and/or upgrading of their generator equipment.
2	Not all high sites have generator back-up. Three of the sites are considered excess by the Army Corps of Engineers and as such are not well maintained.	Reliable back-up power sources are needed at the high sites. However, there is no requirement in the current National Distress System (NDS) for generator back-up.	Group Fort Macon requested the acquisition of generators and battery hotpacks with the appropriate Commands. Maintenance Logistics Command (MLC) took the lead for high site ownership issues and investigation of back-up power.
3	Phone lines may be overwhelmed with volume in the event of Y2K related problems.	Priority phone cards are available that put the caller ahead of others when circuits are busy. Programmable hand held radios can be used to maintain contact with essential personnel when they are not on-site.	Investigate the purchase of cards and equipment to ensure that communications can be maintained in the event of telephone failures.

Table 2 – Fort Macon Exercise Results

For More Information

Contact the USCG Representatives

No Point of Contact (POC) was identified for this exercise.

Or, Visit the Web Sites

Group: http://www.uscg.mil/d5/group/fortmacon/